

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility
(Version 5)

STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening: January 16, 2012

Screener: Douglas Taylor

Panel member validation by: Meryl Williams
Consultant(s):

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4489

PROJECT DURATION : 2

COUNTRIES : Global

PROJECT TITLE: A Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme: Aquifers, Lake/Reservoir Basins, River Basins, Large Marine Ecosystems, and Open Ocean to Catalyze Sound Environmental Management

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: UNEP-DEWA, UNEP-DEPI, UNEP-DHI Centre, UNESCO IOC, UNESCO-IHP, ILEC
“ see Annex 3 for more details

GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

Based on this PIF screening, STAP’s advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes this innovative and ambitious project to undertake a global assessment of transboundary water bodies. We note the extensive preliminary methodological work and commend the peer review process used to produce the publications developed during the predecessor Medium Size Project, Development of Methodologies for GEF Transboundary Waters Assessment, GEF ID 3342.
2. STAP further notes that the partnerships that have emerged, through which the TWAP project will develop the assessment, are appropriate and have the capacity to deliver the necessary work. While STAP is normally not called upon to comment on project resource allocation, the Panel wishes to point out the significant gap which exists between resources available and the needs identified. STAP also has serious concerns about the limited timescale available for the project, which appears to leave little room for more than one annual cycle of data capture, a strategy that appears to be high risk regarding achievement of an effective and useful set of baselines. Also in view of the reduced resources available, STAP suggests that the project consider reducing the coverage of resource systems, particularly removing the LMEs and the Open Oceans as the resources allocated to these are minimal and will likely not enable adequate work. The small funds allocated would be better given to improve the other resource system assessments. Notwithstanding resources, however, the timeframe is of greater concern on this project. Assessment experience would show that the order of 4 years is required to do an adequate job at this scale.
3. The PIF cites the lack of a Convention for the IW focal area and considers that if it were not for the GEF a global assessment would not attract resources. This raises the important question of ownership of such an assessment and its tools, given that at country level use of assessment tools depends upon the utility of data available and the capacity to use it. Also at country level, assessment needs may differ in needs from transboundary needs. Experience of creation and use of supra-national datasets for management of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, for example, appears to indicate that national contributors of data are not necessarily users of the resulting assessments. The project will need to be clear in determining national and supra-national policy and information needs.
4. The PIF is vague on detail of the scale of the assessment issues, even though some of the necessary background materials were contained in the MSP TWAP reports e.g., nearly 13,000 TB lake basins in Africa alone.
5. From a scientific perspective STAP has no doubt that the TWAP will be capable of making available credible tools for development of an assessment, but is concerned about the sustainability of the assessment and buy-in from GEF’s constituency. There may be a need not only for scientific and policy champions of an assessment but also sufficient

transboundary buy-in from countries that are to benefit from the assessment and future iterations. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) employed sub-regional assessments to elicit greater connections to national science centers, however, one criticism of the MA has been that there may be a science-policy disconnect at this scale. In the PPG phase, the partners within TWAP should consider to what extent the previous GEF-4 Focal Area Strategy commitment to TWAP can translate into policy formulation for the GEF-6 Focal Area Strategy, based on the scientific findings of the project.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and the proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.
3. Major revision required	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.